

County of Los Angeles  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES**

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August 14, 2008

**TO:** Each Supervisor

**FROM:** Philip L. Browning, Director

**SUBJECT: VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE 2008 TAX SEASON**

This is to provide you with a report on the results of our countywide Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program for the 2008 tax season. This is the third year of the program, with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) providing free tax preparation services at 14 DPSS VITA sites throughout Los Angeles County. For the 2008 tax season, we were able to expand VITA services to working Food Stamp (FS) and Medi-Cal participants, in addition to CalWORKs families who had been the exclusive service population in the prior two years.

Our VITA Program for 2008 tax season was an overwhelming success. The Internal Revenue Service processed 2,805 tax returns prepared by DPSS staff for our participants, compared to 966 returns in 2007. This is an increase of almost 200% from the 2007 tax season. The processed returns generated tax refunds as follows:

- **\$6.8 million**-total claimed in tax refunds
- **\$4.5 million**-claimed from Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- **\$1.1 million**-claimed from Child Tax Credit (CTC)

Our analysis of filing data shows that 1,901 FS and Medi-Cal participants used VITA services, compared to 892 CalWORKs participants. The data supports the distinct benefits of providing tax preparation services to our FS and Medi-Cal participants. Our data shows that participants received about \$23 in tax refunds for every dollar in staff overtime expended. We also estimate that we saved our participants about \$420,000 in tax preparation fees.

Based on the positive results for 2008, DPSS plans to continue to provide VITA services to our FS and Medi-Cal families in 2009, as well as CalWORKs participants.

The DPSS VITA Program has contributed to the enhancement and integration of the services the County provides to our communities, greatly assisting DPSS families to become self-sufficient, and bringing needed federal dollars to the local economy. The VITA Program has increased awareness of the EITC and CTC for working families.

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c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisor